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So They Lower the Curtain

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Given time to think by the cancellation of my flight home, I have pondered the threats coming out of Moscow and what we might realistically assume will be the trend of U.S.-Soviet relations over the next few years.

I have always favored a reasonably peaceful coexistence between the United States and the Soviet Union because simple sanity requires it. It is these two nations that, in a war, could wipe out the human race.

Nonetheless, I am neither disturbed nor impressed by Russian threats to do drastic things if the United States forces a steep reduction in the number of Soviet diplomats (i.e. spies) assigned to the United Nations in New York.

Drastic—like refusing to go ahead with an agreement to set up a Soviet consulate in New York and a U.S. consulate in Kiev; like the Kremlin's lowering the Iron Curtain again to keep out our rock singers and artists while denying us the joy of seeing Soviet dancers and hockey players; like Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev

telling President Reagan, in a snit, that if the Kremlin can't keep all its cloak-and-dagger people at the U.N., there can't be a summit meeting this year.

Who's kidding whom? The Soviets want a consulate in New York 100 times more than the United States wants one in Kiev. A New York consulate not only would allow the Kremlin to add dozens of more spies to the scores who are among the 275 "diplomats" in the Soviet mission to the U.N., but it would enhance greatly the Soviet ability to engage in economic and technological espionage.

Similarly, the Soviet Union values an airlines agreement more than the United States does—again for espionage reasons. The Soviet airline Aeroflot was caught more than a few times, when an earlier accord was in effect, flying "off course"—just enough to carry out electronic surveillance of U.S. military facilities on the East Coast, including nuclear submarines at Groton, Conn.

A Gorbachev rejection of a 1986 summit would create no great disap-

pointment among Americans of any political persuasion.

If Gorbachev is as shrewd as some have portrayed him to be, he will know that it is a losing game for the Soviets to demand continuation of the status quo in terms of U.N. representation.

For decades, I have been dismayed by the extremist cries to "get the U.S. out of the U.N. and the U.N. out of the U.S." But we have known, long before the defections of such Russians as Arkady Shevchenko, that the Soviets have turned the U.N. mission into a colossal spy base, aimed at wounding or destroying the host country to the U.N. Even if the Soviet mission were reduced to 170 people in two years, as the Reagan administration demands, the communist superpower would still enjoy an espionage advantage far exceeding any intelligence opportunities available to Americans in Moscow.

Soviet diplomats in New York, Washington and elsewhere in America enjoy remarkable freedom. Anatoliy Dobrynin, who is going home after 24 years as ambassador, has played chess and drunk bourbon with the top overseers of U.S.

national security. He has been invited to the Kentucky Derby, the Gridiron Club dinner, assorted concerts—and into the homes of many Americans. Meanwhile, American ambassadors in Moscow have been treated as pariahs. I am convinced that two of my old poker buddies, Ambassadors Llewellyn "Tommy" Thompson and Charles "Chip" Bohlen, died of cancer produced by microwave beams with which Soviet intelligence forces bombarded the American Embassy.

Soviet diplomats in America live in luxury and freedom beyond anything they have known at home. American diplomats in the Soviet Union live in ghettos. Any comparisons are galling to Americans.

Gorbachev is honor-bound to protest any order to reduce the U.N. delegation, but he surely knows that the Soviets have a "good" thing going. Let's see if the Soviet leader accepts reality, or if he really does do something drastic that will hurt the Soviet people while meaning nothing much to Americans.

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